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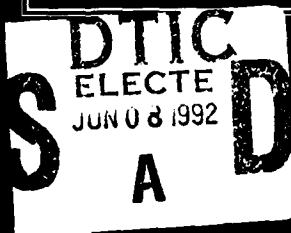
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## SSI Special Report

Reforming NATO's Command and  
Operational Control Structures:  
Progress and Problems



Thomas-Durell Young  
and  
William T. Johnsen

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**REFORMING NATO'S COMMAND AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL STRUCTURES:**

**PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS**

Thomas-Durell Young  
and  
William T. Johnsen



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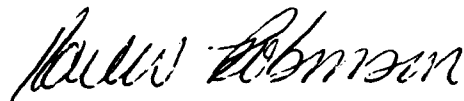
Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA 17013-5050. Comments also may be conveyed directly to the author by calling commercial (717) 245-3911 or DSN 242-3911.

## FOREWORD

One element of NATO's efforts to reform its military structures has been little noticed efforts to reorganize the Alliance's extensive command and operational control structures. It is essential for the Alliance to effect these difficult reforms if it is to rationalize its integrated command structure to face the exigencies of diminished force structures and new operational challenges. However, as can be expected, the reorganization of command structures is first and foremost a political, as opposed to military, act. Therefore, reform has been slow to date.

The authors, have produced this study of how the reorganization process has progressed thus far. Streamlining operational control structures in AFCENT has gone relatively smoothly, while AFNORTH continues to defy easy resolution. They also explain where long-standing difficulties are likely to impede needed reform, e.g., AFSOUTH, at a time when risks to the Alliance have shifted southward. Moreover, a description of the operational control arrangements for Rapid Reaction Forces is provided, as well as an assessment of the real and potential difficulties to NATO formations posed by a European Reaction Corps. Given the intensely political nature of command at the highest level, the authors demonstrate the need to consider the political aspects of wartime operational control arrangements in attempting to appreciate the difficulty of this ongoing streamline process.

This report meets an identified study requirement as established in SSI's annual research program, *The Army's Strategic Role in a New World Order: A Prioritized Research Program*, 1992.



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## **REFORMING NATO'S COMMAND AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL STRUCTURES: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS**

### **Introduction.**

The ending of the cold war and the blossoming rapprochement between NATO and its former adversaries in Central and Eastern Europe have exerted a predictable influence on NATO to conform to these new security realities by reforming its strategy and force structure. In consequence, the previous conditions where sizeable standing conventional and nuclear forces, arrayed in the Central Region, ever vigilant to meet a short-warning offensive across the now defunct inter-German border, have given way to the Alliance's "New Strategic Concept" which stresses crisis management, minimal nuclear deterrence and greater emphasis placed on creating multinational formations.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it is becoming increasingly evident that the Alliance will be forced to accomplish these new daunting missions with significant reductions in its members' defense budgets. Indeed, this important consideration alone makes a review of the Alliance's existing military structures essential. To refuse to do so would court the disastrous possibility of the Alliance losing political acceptance by its members due to its military irrelevance to the emerging political and security environment in Europe. And, as vividly demonstrated by persistent European Community (EC) and Western European Union (WEU) efforts to



establish a European defense identity (e.g., the Maastricht Summit),<sup>2</sup> there are proposed institutional alternatives to NATO, irrespective of their many widely acknowledged limitations.

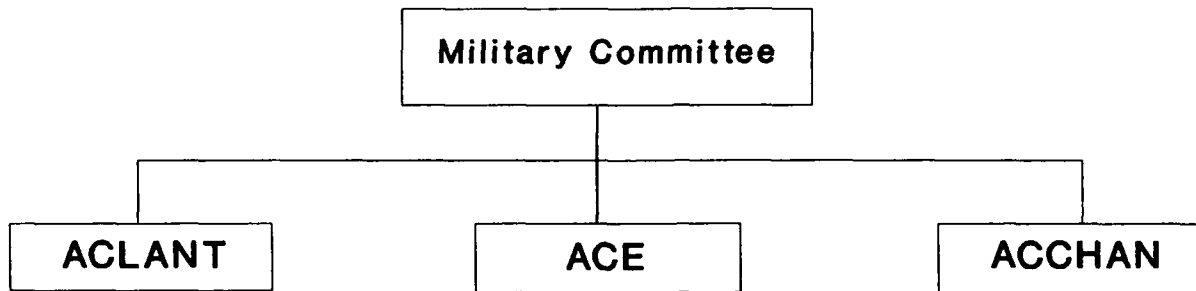
Accompanying the 1990-91 review of the Alliance's force structure and strategy<sup>3</sup> has been the less observable move to reorganize its command and control<sup>4</sup> requirements for the execution of the New Strategic Concept.<sup>5</sup> In the final analysis, the restructuring of the military organizations and resultant redistribution of senior commander positions will no doubt prove to be as equally daunting as the recent experience in reaching consensus upon the "Alliance's New Strategic Concept." Since national influence and prestige at the highest military levels of the Alliance is at stake in this review process, one can rest assured that the "primacy of politics" will prevail in the distribution of these command positions. For instance, all one needs do is to review the press reports of the acrimonious public debate during the first half of 1991 between Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany over which country would lead the Alliance's new ACE Rapid Reaction Corps<sup>6</sup> to appreciate the political sensitivity that surrounds the reorganization of NATO's numerous headquarters.

Some preliminary decisions to rationalize and reorganize existing wartime operational control structures were announced at the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) meeting of December

1991,<sup>7</sup> albeit a more comprehensive explanation of command restructuring has yet to be presented in public (see Figure 1). At the highest level, the United States will retain leadership of the two Major NATO Commands (MNCs), Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) and Allied Command Europe (ACE). Britain has lost its previous MNC, Allied Command Channel (ACCHAN),<sup>8</sup> which is to be merged with a reorganized Allied Forces Northern Europe (AFNORTH) under ACE.

But, while the questions of the number of MNCs and their general areas of responsibility have largely been resolved, questions still remain about substrata commands in ACE. These commands include, Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs), Principal Subordinate Commands (PSCs), and the entire issue of command and control of new rapid reaction formations currently being organized. It is possible to identify from public sources current and future points of contention in the Alliance which will make command and control reorganization difficult. These areas of contention include continuing disagreements over the reorganization of AFNORTH, lingering issues of command of the rapid reaction formations, and numerous predictable problems associated with Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH). Moreover, AFCENT will also undergo many changes as it reorganizes and rationalizes its wartime operational control structures due, in part, to the efforts by the Federal Republic of Germany to "normalize" aspects of its defense structures.

# Major NATO Commands



## New Structure

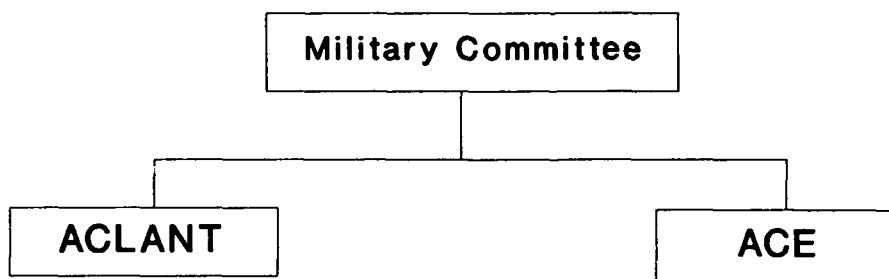


Figure 1

This essay will argue that the political ramifications emanating from the ending of the cold war necessitate a comprehensive review of the Alliance's peacetime command organizations and wartime operational control structures to fit the Alliance's newly announced force structure. Whether one likes it or not, the process of statal disintegration (as one currently sees in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia) and the alteration of borders (as produced by the unification of Germany) *cannot* necessarily be controlled to the benefit of the West in all cases. Current supranational political and security structures in Europe appear to be ill-suited to deal with new forms of actual and potential conflict in, and adjacent to, the European Phoenix emerging from the ashes of the cold war. If NATO is to be capable of implementing its new strategy which stresses crisis management in, not to mention outside of, Europe, and thereby maintaining a position to exert a positive force to resolve conflicts, then the means to exercise operational control over allied military forces must change.

To achieve this ambitious objective, considerable political opposition must be overcome. At stake are national influence and prestige: characteristics of state sovereignty which do not lend themselves to easy, let alone logical, solution. Moreover, as will be argued later in this essay, it would be erroneous to consider that the current envisaged

alterations to NATO's integrated command structure will be sufficient. As the Alliance attempts to alter its security orientation to "*tous azimuts*," greater emphasis must be placed not only on more appropriate operational control structures, but also on changing Alliance members' force structures to enable a more flexible deployment of what will surely be smaller numbers of allied forces in crisis situations.

Finally, two points of explanation are in order. First, while this essay deals with "NATO" command organizations and wartime operational control structures, no significant changes to ACLANT have been proposed to date; thus, by default, attention will be focused on ACCHAN and ACE. Second, the question of nationality of the commander of two remaining MNCs will not be dealt with here. The size of the U.S. Navy has long militated against a European commander of ACLANT. Apropos the question of "Europeanizing" SACEUR, it is instructive to note that these proposals have emanated from commentators in North America, as opposed to Western Europe.<sup>9</sup> Thus, there appears to be little discernible *European* support in the Alliance to change the nationality of these two positions for the moment.

#### **Contemporary Problems Facing MSCs in ACE.**

The rapid transformation of the European security landscape, from one dominated by East-West bloc confrontation to one slowly evolving toward a threat ambiguous, albeit not

barren, environment, has presented NATO with new security challenges, while bringing to the surface long-standing and unresolved problems in NATO's existing command and control arrangements.<sup>10</sup> The first section of this essay will briefly describe some of the more difficult issues which will need to be addressed in ACE as the Alliance reforms its command and control structures for the immediate term.

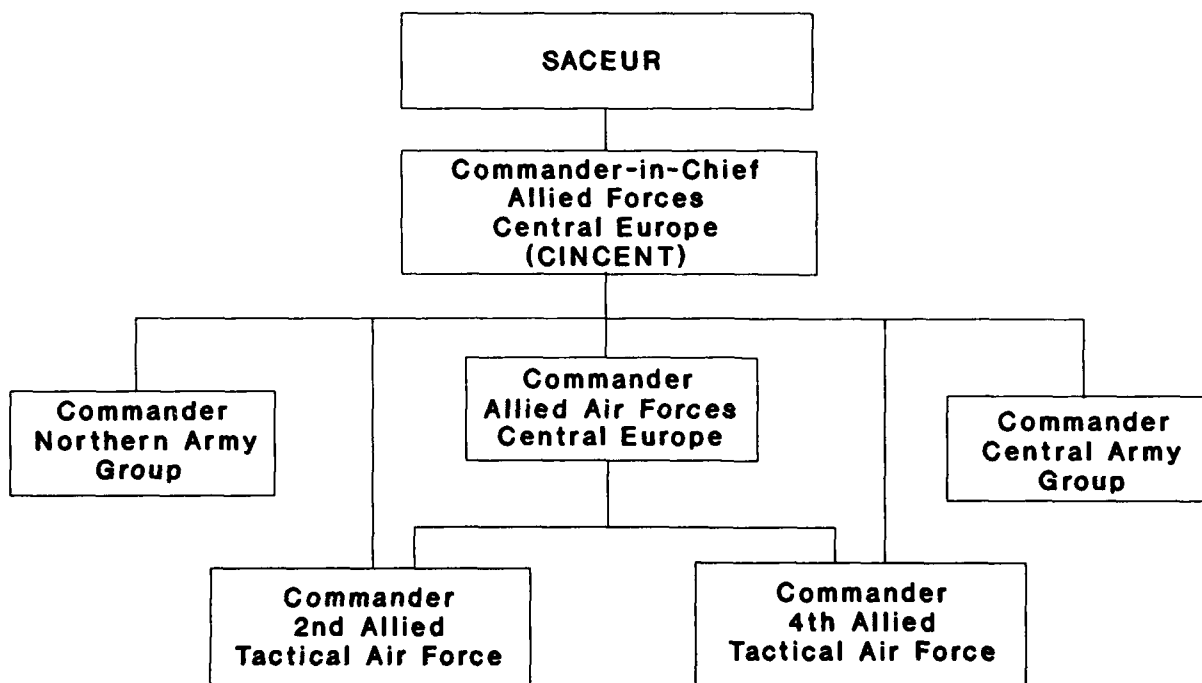
Political, and even military, rationale would seem to dictate that the current division of three geographically-defined MSCs within ACE (north, central and south) should be maintained for the foreseeable future. The reason for this is that the geographic singularity of each region appears to require one headquarters to concentrate its effort toward planning campaigns in these regions. This does not imply that inter-MSC transfer of forces during crisis should not be encouraged. (Indeed, the future political longevity of the Alliance will depend upon effecting this ambitious goal). Rather, the current singular requirements of directing operational control at the theater level are such as to necessitate the maintenance of at least three MSCs, or MSC-like commands in ACE. Note that the two other MSCs in ACE, UK Air Forces Command (UK AIR) and the ACE Mobile Force (AMF), Land and Air, will not be dealt with separately, since they themselves, or their responsibilities, will be subsumed by the

new Allied Forces Northwestern Command (AFNORTHWEST)<sup>11</sup> and the Rapid Reaction Forces, respectively.

*Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT)*. The AFCENT region stands to change fundamentally during the next few years because much of the positive change in the previous external security environment directly impacts upon it (see Figure 2). Under current arrangements,<sup>12</sup> five PSCs report to the AFCENT commander ("CINCENT": a German four-star). At present, the ground component consists of the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) and Central Army Group (CENTAG). A British four-star general commands NORTHAG and is dual-hatted to command the British Army of the Rhine, while CENTAG is commanded by a U.S. four-star general who is also Commander U.S. Army Europe. On the air side, Allied Air Forces Central Europe (currently commanded by a U.S. Air Force four-star general who is also Commander U.S. Air Forces, Europe) exercises operational control over 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force (commanded by a Royal Air Force Air Marshal) and 4th Allied Tactical Air Force (commanded by a German three-star general).

The central problem associated with this current structure is as forward deployed ground and air units diminish in size, the command elements of these forces need to be reduced. Allied forces stationed in the Federal Republic have already begun the process of retrenchment.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, growing environmental and German sovereignty restrictions on military

# AFCENT Command Structure



## Proposed Structure

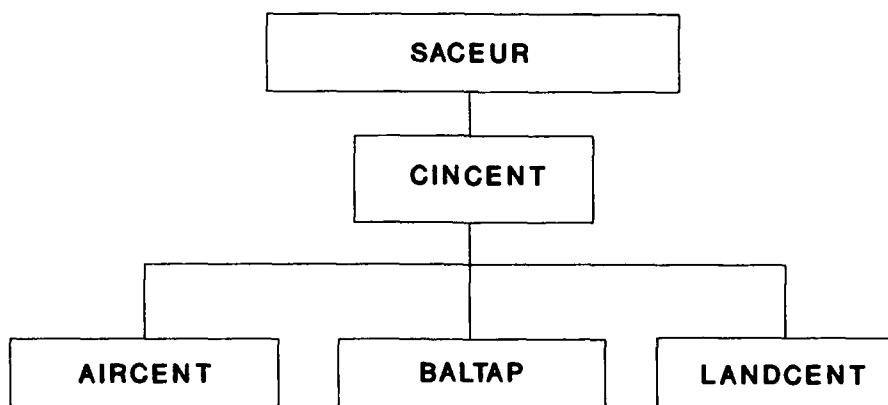


Figure 2



activities in that country will make stationing of foreign forces there increasingly less attractive, thereby increasing pressure to reduce forward deployed main defense land and air units in the Federal Republic.<sup>14</sup> This particular development could result in requiring future operational control structures in the AFCENT region to become increasingly more mobilization/reconstitution responsive than already envisaged. Not surprisingly, at the December 1991 Defense Planning Committee (DPC) meeting, Defense Ministers agreed that AFCENT should amalgamate its current five PSC headquarters into three, which will consist of a AIRCENT and LANDCENT headquarters,<sup>15</sup> as well as shifting Allied Forces Baltic Approach Command (BALTAP) from AFNORTH to AFCENT.<sup>16</sup>

Of immediate import to LANDCENT will be the organization of remaining main defense allied ground forces into multinational formations (see Figure 3).<sup>17</sup> The serious wartime operational control challenges involved in the organization of multinational formations have resulted in integration below the division level being rejected in most cases (the Belgian-led multinational corps envisaged to consist of national brigades being one exception). The model for wartime operational control over most of these formations would appear to have been that of the U.S. Army VII Corps-12th Panzer Division relationship where "integration" was limited to the transfer of operational control of units at the divisional level during

# LANDCENT SPAN OF OPERATIONAL CONTROL

## Multinational Corps

XXX•  
LANDJUT

XXX  
NL

XXX  
BE

XXX  
GE

XXX  
GE

XXX  
US

XXX  
GE

EAST \*\*

XXX - CORPS  
XX - DIVISION  
X - BRIGADE

## National

XX  
GE

XX  
NL

X  
BE

XX  
GE

XX  
GE

XX  
US

XX  
GE

## Contributions

XX  
DA

XX  
GE

X  
US

XX  
NL

XX  
GE

XX  
US

XX  
GE

X  
NL

X  
GE

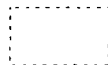
XX  
GB

XX  
US

XX  
GE

X  
CA ?

DUAL HATTED



DUAL ROLE TO  
ACE RAPID  
REACTION CORPS

- TO BECOME PART OF AFCENT
- \*\* CANNOT FALL UNDER NATO COMMAND UNTIL 1995

Figure 3

exercises and wartime.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, given the disappearance of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact threat to the Central Region, the previous need for the creation of multinational units, e.g., to manifest Alliance solidarity while the Soviet Union was engaged in strategic retreat, no longer holds.<sup>19</sup> In consequence, one can confidently predict that creating multinational units of main defense forces will increasingly be done for its political value as opposed to its military utility. The political implications and military aspects of multinationality concerning rapid reaction forces will be dealt with below.

As regards the AIRCENT Headquarters, in addition to coordinating air operations with fewer assets, this headquarters will also be forced to coordinate its activities within new political parameters and with fewer allied missions. As a result of the unification of Germany and the gaining of full sovereignty by the Federal Republic, the *Luftwaffe* now has responsibility for the policing of German airspace, a role previously exercised largely by the United States and Britain. Additionally, the *Luftwaffe* has sole responsibility for the air defense over the former territory of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>20</sup> Under the terms of the "Two Plus Four Treaty," these *Luftwaffe* assets must operate outside NATO air defense structures until the end of 1994. After that date, NATO and the Federal Republic must decide what type of arrangement should replace present air defense arrangements in the east.<sup>21</sup>

These new operating conditions will surely necessitate a review of existing air defense command and control arrangements in the Central Region.

Finally, both future air and ground command and control structures in AFCENT will be influenced by a little appreciated move by the Federal Republic to "normalize," selectively, parts of its defense capabilities. Since the armament of the Federal Republic in 1955, the *Bundeswehr* has lacked key operational control structures, which has made the national employment of military force of any size in a joint setting almost an impossibility.<sup>22</sup> In wartime, it had been assumed that NATO operational control arrangements would be used, thereby obviating the need for national operational control structures at the Army Group and joint levels. The experience of deploying forces for humanitarian missions to Iran, Iraq and Turkey, in spring 1991, demonstrated to Bonn the undisputable need for a national joint operational control body to exercise effective command and control over *Bundeswehr* units, particularly outside of the Central Region.<sup>23</sup>

Now that the two Germanies are united, Bonn has moved to rectify what has been an unbalanced force structure, as well as create new headquarters which have in the past "singularized," or made special, Germany's position in the Alliance (see Figure 4).<sup>24</sup> Of significance to NATO operational control structures, Bonn is in the process of establishing an Army command

# New German Command and Control Structure

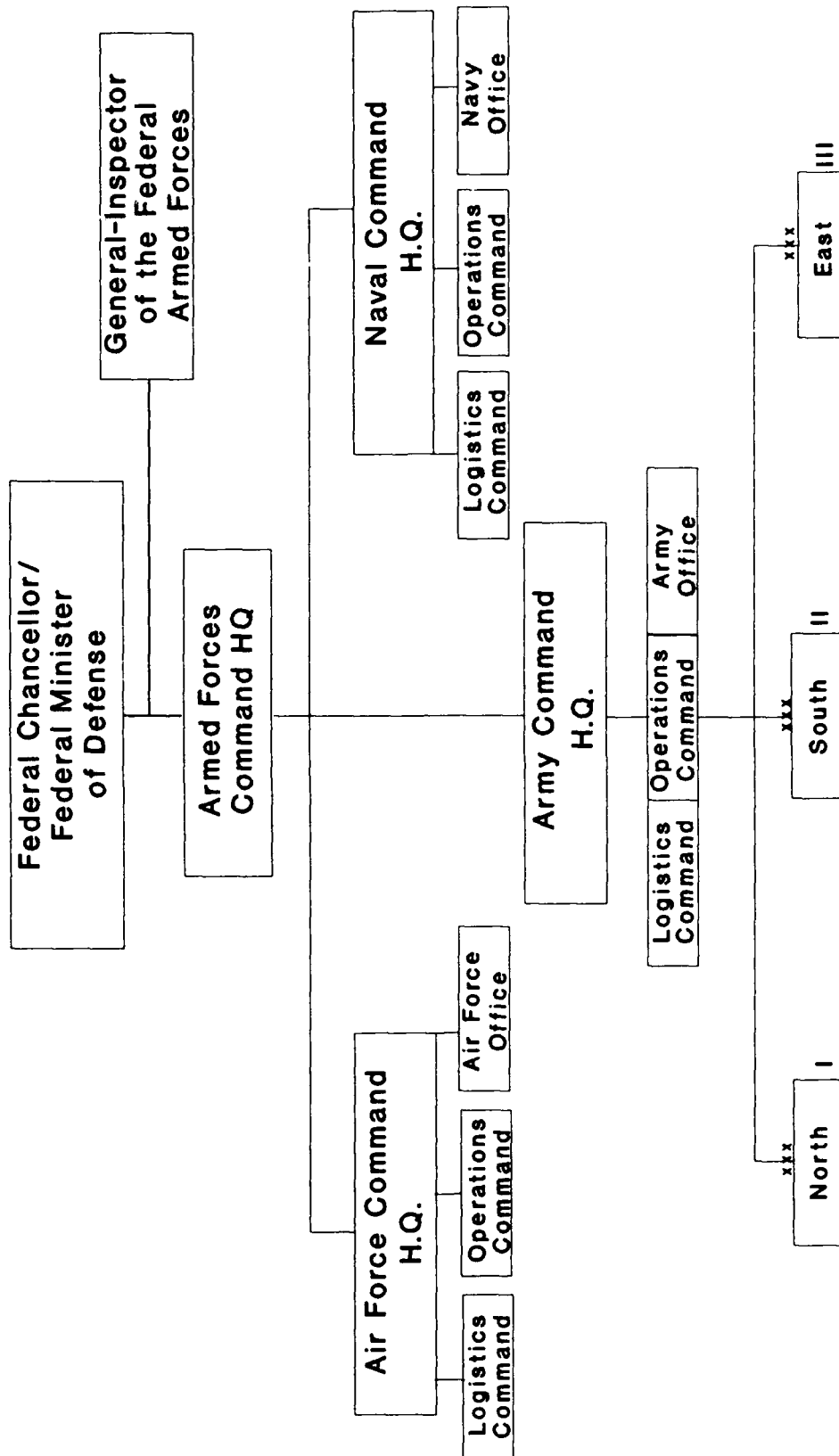


Figure 4

headquarters (*Heeresfuehrungskommando*) to exercise command and operational control above the three German Army Corps,<sup>25</sup> as well as to create an armed forces joint command headquarters (*Streitkraeftefuehrungskommando*). The operational implications of these actions are not likely to cause considerable problems in the AFCENT region, although NATO operational control arrangements will have to take into consideration the fact that the *Bundeswehr* will increasingly have national missions, which may need to be accomplished at the expense of allied ones, as is the case with any sovereign country. One implication of Bonn's desire to assume greater national military responsibilities relates to its argument to change the operational borders between AFCENT and AFNORTH. This issue will be dealt with below.

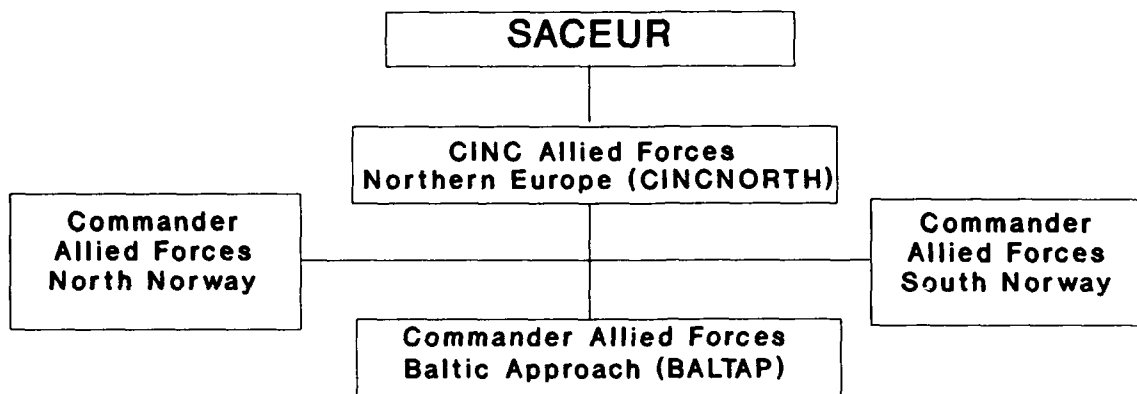
At the *political* level, however, sensitive decisions will need to be made shortly as relate to the location and nationality of who will command LANDCENT and AIRCENT.<sup>26</sup> One could expect that Bonn would oppose *in extremis* a British commander of this headquarters in view of the recent acrimonious debate between Germany and the United Kingdom over command of the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC). Moreover, other countries in the Central Region (the BENELUX and Denmark) do not have armies of sufficient size to produce a commander with experience to exercise wartime operational control over such a large formation. Finally, leaving aside the United

States, the other likely candidate (for LANDCENT and/or AFCENT), France, still refuses to participate in the Alliance's integrated command structure.

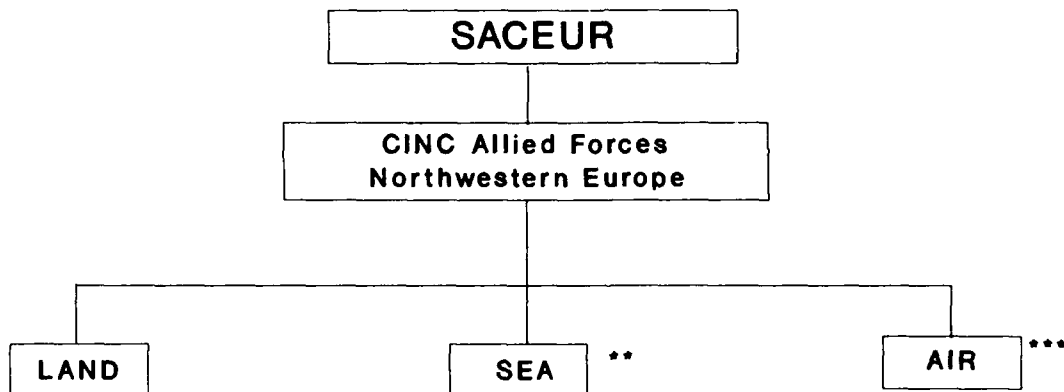
Therefore, the logical choice to command the LANDCENT headquarters is a German four-star general. In addition to the fact that Germany has the most territory to defend in AFCENT, it will also be the greatest contributor of forces to this command. However, how this will sit with other AFCENT countries, particularly if this German commander is dual-hatted to a national command, remains to be seen. At a time when Bonn is perceived as having become the principal European economic and political power, opposition to a German LANDCENT commander may develop, particularly since CINCENT is a German four-star general and is likely to remain so. Conversely, should the Alliance designate a German to command LANDCENT, this act would constitute a strong vote by the Alliance of the collective confidence it has in the Federal Republic.

*Allied Forces Northern Europe (AFNORTH)*. Considerable controversy has been generated by attempts to reorganize operational control arrangements in the Nordic region (see Figure 5). A key problem is Norway's long-standing insistence upon having a link to the Central Region through NATO wartime operational control arrangements and Germany's recent insistence that all its territory come under one MSC.<sup>27</sup> In attempting to assuage national sensitivities and realign

# AFNORTH



## Proposed Structure \*



\*As proposed PSC's have not yet been identified, the above delineation of functional commands is only representational.

\*\*To include ACCHAN.

\*\*\*To include UKAIR.

Figure 5



wartime operational control arrangements to the altered security realities of the Nordic region, proposed arrangements, as reported at least, appear to be complicated at best, and possibly unworkable at worst.

In essence, Norway has long been fearful that its allies to the south in the Central Region might ignore its security concerns in a crisis.<sup>28</sup> While the security situation in Central Europe has changed for the better following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and disintegration of the Soviet Union, this improvement was not immediately mirrored in northern Norway from the perspective of Oslo. For example, the transfer of Soviet military equipment from the Central Region to the Kola Peninsula during 1990 and 1991 resulted in a public threat in May 1991 made by Norwegian Defense Minister, Johan Holst, that Norway would not ratify the CFE Treaty unless Oslo's concerns over this buildup in conventional forces were met.<sup>29</sup>

Under long-standing operational control arrangements, the LANDJUT multinational corps, comprising the 6th German *Panzergrenadier* Division and the Danish Mechanized Jutland Division, would fall under the operational control of the Commander of BALTAP in wartime; a PSC of AFNORTH. By placing all of the Federal Republic in one MSC, Bonn would then be able to concentrate the German Army in a crisis, which must shrink from 48 to 28 maneuver brigades by 1994, in eastern Germany, as

opposed to being tied to what has become, for all intents and purposes, a rearward area (i.e., Schleswig-Holstein). Bonn's responsibility to defend the former coastal area of the former German Democratic Republic also lends strong support to the redesignation of this area's responsibility and forces to AFCENT. Consequently, the LANDJUT Corps and previous AFNORTH/AFCENT border through Northern Germany, as configured in the past to meet an offensive by the Warsaw Pact, simply are no longer relevant.

The Norwegian press has reported that government officials in Oslo have been strongly opposed to any initiative in NATO that would result in AFNORTH's area of responsibility being cut off from the Central Region.<sup>30</sup> This particular wartime operational control relationship has major political importance to Norway because Oslo is neither a member of the EC, nor the WEU. While the Soviet military threat to Northern Norway has diminished considerably, the ensuing uncertainty of the Russian Republic's defense structure and political ambitions in the Nordic region have Norwegian officials still concerned over their country's vulnerability.<sup>31</sup> As a result of considerable acrimonious debate in the Alliance, as reported in the press,<sup>32</sup> a solution to meet both Germany's and Norway's interests has been difficult to achieve (see Figure 6). According to Defense Minister Holst,<sup>33</sup> one solution is that Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark would become part of AFCENT. NATO's Northern Command

# Proposed changes to AFCENT and AFNORTH

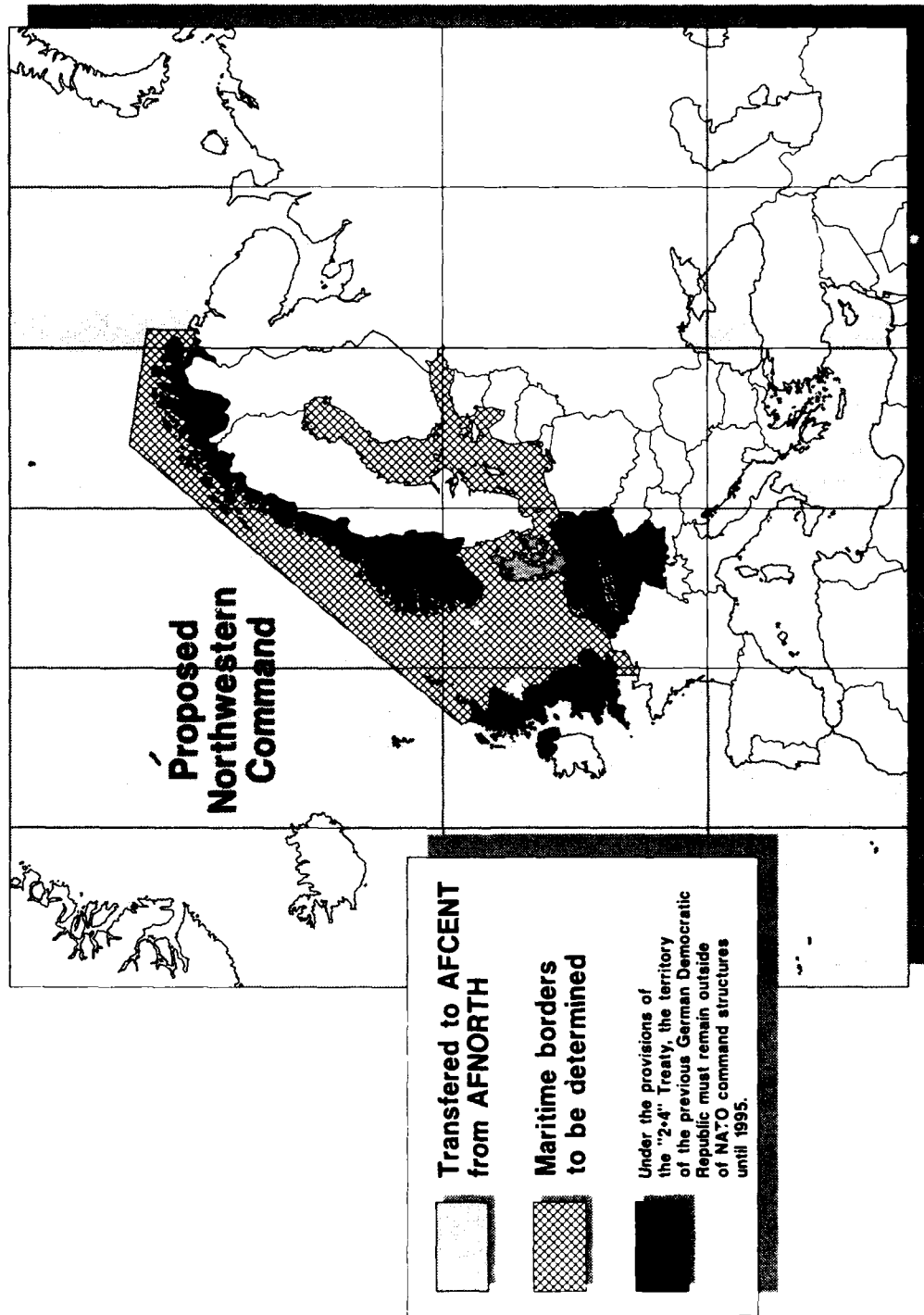


Figure 6

at Kolsas would be dissolved in its current configuration. ACCHAN, it will be recalled, is to be dissolved, but in its place the headquarters of AFNORTHWEST is to be established at Northwood, U.K. and headed by a British commander. This headquarters would assume responsibility for the air and land defense of the British Isles and Norway, in addition to the sea defense of the English Channel, the North Sea, and the Baltic Sea. AFNORTHWEST would exercise operational control over Belgian, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, and German naval units in wartime, and a new as yet unnamed allied headquarters in Norway (headed by a Norwegian), would also report to AFNORTHWEST.<sup>34</sup>

One could foresee that whatever final form this agreement takes, wartime operational control issues in AFNORTHWEST will almost invariably anger many and please few. In terms of basic operational considerations, it makes little sense that the air and land defense of Denmark and the German Baltic coast are an AFCENT responsibility, while AFNORTHWEST (whose headquarters is in the United Kingdom) is responsible for the maritime defense of the Baltic Sea. For Germany, unification and an end to its territory being divided between two MSCs would appear to be at the cost of sacrificing the *Bundesmarine* to AFNORTHWEST, and thereby complicating a joint defense of the eastern Federal Republic of Germany. The Norwegians, in any case, would lose their *pied de terre* on the Central Region (through BALTAP's transfer to AFCENT), despite the creation of AFNORTHWEST and

the proposal to establish a new NATO headquarters in Norway to be headed by a Norwegian, as opposed to a British, general, as exists under previous AFNORTH arrangements. Even Britain is likely to have reason to be dissatisfied. Albeit press reports state that Britain will likely command AFNORTHWEST, London will still lose its sole MNC (ACCHAN), along with at least one MSC, UKAIR. Additionally, under this proposal, the United Kingdom, for the first time, would become part of ACE.<sup>35</sup>

Even if one were to assume that this proposed arrangement would function well in peacetime and even in crisis or war (and this could be seen as being problematic), the fact remains that at a time when the Alliance is attempting to reassure all of its members of the continued relevance of NATO to their respective security, Norway will likely still perceive that it is being marginalized. As argued in an editorial in *Aftenposten*, NATO runs the risk of conveying to the Norwegian public that it no longer finds Norway so interesting. However, as recognized in the same editorial, Norway itself must put its own house into order.<sup>36</sup> One would assume that this refers to the fact that Norwegian anxieties of being isolated from its allies in Central Europe could be mitigated through Oslo's own efforts to join the WEU, whose treaty provisions (Article IV of the modified Brussels Treaty) for mutual security support and assistance are *stronger* than those of NATO.<sup>37</sup> Notwithstanding this fact, it would seem that the operational control

controversy in the AFNORTH/AFNORTHWEST area will continue to plague NATO even after it has officially been "solved."

*Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH)*. Over the years, AFSOUTH has been a relative backwater in European security (see Figure 7). This has been due to focus on the Central Region and the mission of this headquarters which has essentially been one of securing the Mediterranean and serving as a conduit to move air and ground reinforcement forces to the eastern Mediterranean in an emergency. Moreover, AFSOUTH has long been plagued by the fact that it is in reality a collection of multiple theaters which do not lend themselves to mutual support and thereby has made reaching consensus over issues difficult. The significant positive change which has taken place in the Central Region's security situation now allows the Alliance to judge the Southern Region's problems on their own merit. In light of the many uncertainties present in this region, it could be expected that southern NATO partners will wish to strengthen wartime operational control arrangements to conform to the emergence of new risks to collective security.<sup>38</sup> A survey of individual security situations of key southern allies is sobering.<sup>39</sup>

Ankara continues to see large military forces stationed and emerging across its eastern borders in former Soviet Republics which have gained independence, and which have traditionally had strong antipathy toward each other, not to

# AFSOUTH

SACEUR

Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces  
Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH)

Commander Allied  
Land Forces  
Southern Europe

Commander Allied  
Air Forces  
Southern Europe

Commander Allied Land  
Forces Southeastern  
Europe

Commander Allied  
Naval Forces  
Southern Europe

Commander Naval  
Striking & Support  
Forces Southern  
Europe

Commander 6th  
Allied Tactical Air  
Force

Commander 6th  
Allied Tactical Air  
Force

Commander  
Gibraltar  
Mediterranean

Commander Central  
Mediterranean

Commander  
Northeast  
Mediterranean

Commander  
Submarines  
Mediterranean

Commander  
Eastern  
Mediterranean

Commander  
Maritime  
Air Forces  
Mediterranean

Figure 7

mention toward Turkey. Added to this is the presence of such potentially destabilizing states as Iraq and Syria on Ankara's eastern and southern borders.<sup>40</sup> For its part, Rome has expressed concern that the improved security situation in Central Europe could result in Italy becoming decoupled from its close allies to the north at a time when the Maghreb shows signs of becoming destabilized through the rise in popularity of Islamic fundamentalist movements.<sup>41</sup>

While not part of the AFSOUTH command structure, France and Spain have increasingly become sensitive to developments in the Mediterranean, the imposition of martial law in Algeria being a good example.<sup>42</sup> In France, home to over four million Muslims, domestic political conflicts with Muslim immigrants have been exacerbated by a perceived fear that a radical North African state might attempt to support the claims of their "oppressed" brethren in Europe through the use of long-range weapons of mass destruction.<sup>43</sup> According to one press report, this anxiety on the part of the southern Alliance members has not been ignored by NATO and is being addressed in its current planning.<sup>44</sup>

In view of the fact that the center of gravity in terms of threat/risk perceptions is shifting southward,<sup>45</sup> the Alliance may wish to rethink its current approach to wartime operational control arrangements for the entire region. After all, there are elements of the current structure which are broken. For



instance, even though Greece returned to the Integrated Military Command system on October 20, 1980, it does not participate in all of the wartime operational control arrangements of the Alliance in that region. Probably worst of all, there are no NATO headquarters in Greece and no fora for the coordination of Greco-Turkish defense efforts. Consequently, the task of achieving operational planning coordination by the Alliance has been challenging at best.<sup>46</sup>

One proposal to overcome intra-Alliance political sensitivities and promote increased cooperation among interested NATO partners is to create allied operational control arrangements, where appropriate, along functional lines with omni-directional orientation, vice specific geographic delineation, where possible.<sup>47</sup> For instance, while generally only thought of as a Central Region state, as stated above, historically France has been sensitive to security developments in the Mediterranean. Perhaps France's long-standing opposition to participating in NATO's wartime integrated command arrangements could be mitigated should more functional arrangements be employed, and which deal with contingencies Paris finds of immediate importance.<sup>48</sup> France's recent concession to Germany that, in the event of a conflict in Europe, the proposed European Corps (based upon the existing Franco-German brigade) would fall under NATO operational control under certain contingencies<sup>49</sup> evinces a major shift in

French policy toward NATO military arrangements, and this new attitude may be replicated in AFSOUTH. In view of Rome's central location in the Mediterranean and strong record of commitment to the Alliance, Italy would be a logical choice for the basing of future headquarters to exercise operational control over these functional formations.

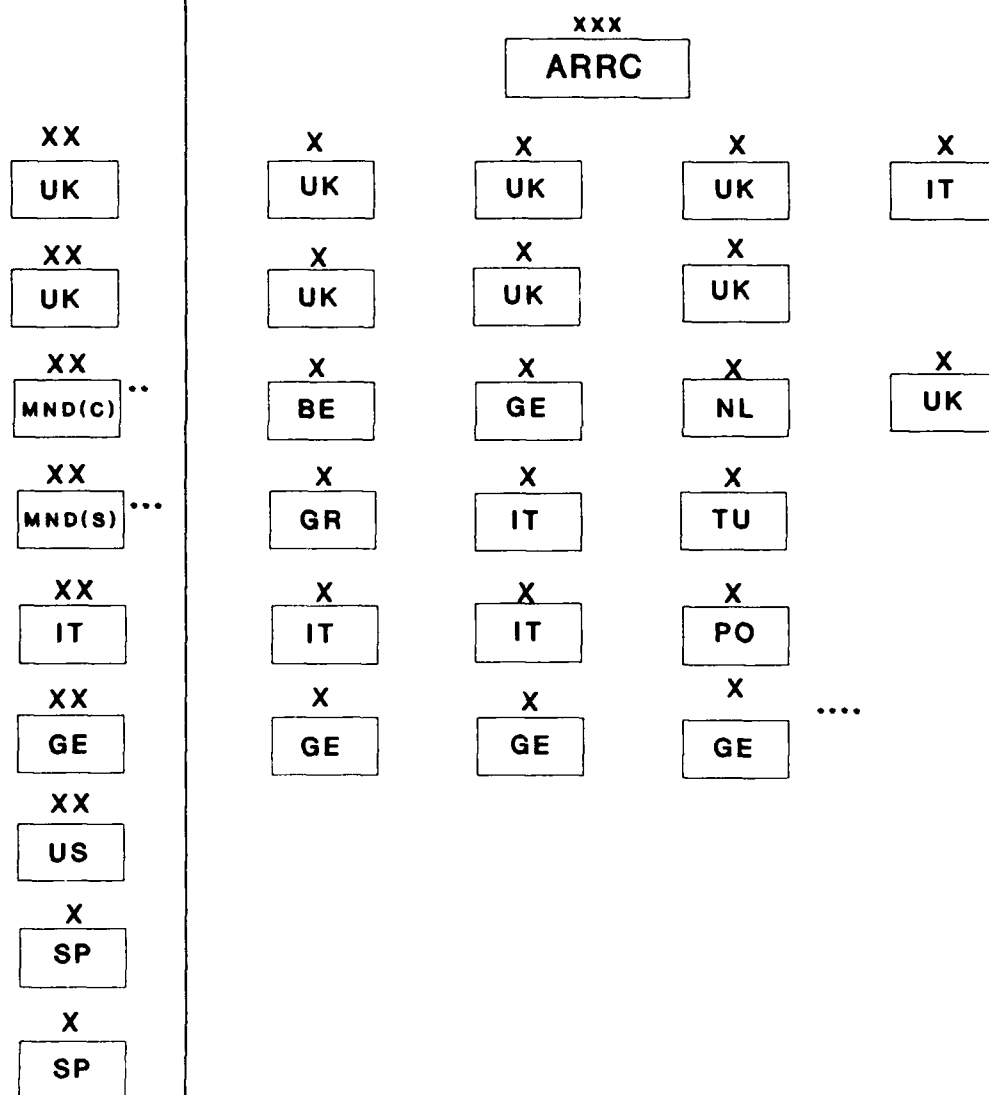
*Rapid Reaction Forces.* Rapid reaction capabilities in ACE have in the past been limited to AMF Land and Air, Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT) and the Naval On Call Force Mediterranean (NAVOCFORMED). At the July 1990 NATO Summit held in London, it was announced that an enhanced rapid reaction capability would be created which led to the establishment of new NATO Rapid Reaction Formations.<sup>50</sup> These units have all but taken priority in terms of financial resources and attention over main defense and augmentation forces in the Alliance. Indeed, whatever financial growth will occur in NATO member defense budgets during the immediate future, it can be expected that these resources will be directed toward improving and expanding national rapid reaction capabilities, as opposed to main defense missions. At the May 1991 DPC meeting, it was announced that Rapid Reaction Formations would comprise contributions from most allies and would include national as well as multinational formations. These formation are also to include maritime and aerial elements (see Figure 8).<sup>51</sup>

## RAPID REACTION FORMATIONS

### Immediate Reaction Forces (IRF)

- Allied Forces Europe Mobile Force - Land (Bde.+)
- Allied Forces Europe Mobile Force - Air (19 Squadrons)\*
- Standing Naval Forces (Atlantic, Mediterranean)

## Allied Forces Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC)



### Figure 8

**\*Size to Squadron and quality of Aircraft varies considerably**

**\*\*Multinational Division (Central Region)**

**\*\*\*Multinational Division (South)**

**\*\*\*\*Dual Role in Central Region with GE Corps**

## **Rapid Reaction Forces (Air)**

**•35 Squadrons (including IRF)**

**Figure 8 (cont)**

o *Immediate Reaction Forces* are to consist of the ACE Mobile Forces, Air and Land, as well as two standing naval forces, STANAVFORLANT and NAVOCFORMED, the latter of which is to become Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED).<sup>52</sup> This force is envisaged to maintain a high readiness level to enable it to be the first response element of the Rapid Reaction Force. The commander of the AMF Land is a two-star general, whose nationality is rotated among the contributing members. As an MSC, it is directly under the command and operational control of SACEUR. The AMF is slated to increase eventually in size to evolve into the Immediate Reaction Force. Whether one headquarters will provide operational control over all of the different elements of the Immediate Rapid Reaction Force has yet to be determined. Of interest in regard to the standing naval forces is the fact that these formations, as part of Immediate Reaction forces, will come under the operational control of SACEUR, as opposed to ACLANT and AFSOUTH.<sup>53</sup>

o *ACE Rapid Reaction Corps.* The issue of who will command the ARRC has been a contentious one for the Alliance to resolve. Moreover, controversy concerning the issue of command continues to plague planning for the ARRC. In addition to problems associated with national animosity and different national views as to how the ARRC

is to be employed, Rapid Reaction Forces could well be the only growth areas in European defense for many years to come. Thus, when discussions began in early 1991 regarding the command of the ARRC, conflict soon developed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom over this prized headquarters.

While London has the most experience in conducting out-of-area campaigns and Germany has yet to come to terms politically with the employment of the *Bundeswehr* outside of the Central Region, it was felt in Bonn that the envisaged role of the ARRC (i.e., operations in Europe), would be more demanding than former "colonial" style operations.<sup>54</sup> The dispute resulted in bitter acrimony which became public (and rather nasty) in spring 1991.<sup>55</sup> However, at the May 1991 DPC meeting, Defense Ministers decided that London would command the ARRC.<sup>56</sup>

The ARRC will be commanded by a British officer (three-star) and a multinational Reaction Force Planning Staff has been established at SHAPE. This planning staff will report directly to SACEUR, not the SHAPE staff, and is to develop and coordinate plans for all ACE Reaction Forces.<sup>57</sup> Left unresolved is the exact "designation" of the ARRC (MSC or PSC) and what will be the exact operational control relationship between the different reaction formations.

Regrettably, the DPC decision in May 1991 did not finally resolve the issue and controversy continues to plague the ARRC. Some Europeans are dissatisfied because Britain's stated contributions to the ARRC are dual-hatted to other roles (e.g., North Ireland).<sup>58</sup> Another complication arose in fall 1991 when Bonn demanded that the air component of the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps be headed by a *Luftwaffe* three-star general.<sup>59</sup> This latter point has been accepted by the Alliance, however, perhaps not to the complete satisfaction of the Federal Republic. An "air planning staff" for the Reaction Forces has been established at Rheindahlen, Germany, headed by a *Luftwaffe* three-star general. However, this commander's responsibilities are limited to ensuring operational readiness and he has no operational control over aircraft.<sup>60</sup>

One final aspect on rapid reaction multinationality needs to be discussed. This concerns efforts to establish a Western European defense identity. A recent important effort to achieve this illusive goal was the October 1991 proposal by German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President Francois Mitterrand to create a European Corps, based upon the current Franco-German brigade.<sup>61</sup> One important result emanating from the December 1991 EC Maastricht Summit was that efforts to create a European defense identity would go forward,

but within the context of the Western European Union (WEU), as opposed to the European Community (EC) itself.<sup>62</sup>

While perhaps this announcement could be interpreted as constituting a matter of little import, in actuality the operational control over this proposed formation, as well as its envisaged mission, could complicate efforts to establish firmly the ARRC, and clearly define its operational control mechanisms. To be sure, in explaining the European Corps<sup>63</sup> proposal, Chancellor Kohl was adamant that any German contribution of forces to this proposed formation would be done only on the basis of dual-hatting.<sup>64</sup> This is to say that German contributions would keep their NATO designated missions, but would also assume other missions under WEU operational control structures.

Efforts to define more specifically what exactly the mission of this European formation will be, as well as what the wartime operational control relationship between it and NATO formations should be, were apparently unsuccessful until German officials announced in February 1992 that France had agreed that the European Corps would serve under NATO operational control arrangements in the case where a NATO member state were attacked. For other campaigns (e.g., out-of-area), the European Corps would come under WEU operational control mechanisms, which have yet to be established.<sup>65</sup> While admittedly an important concession by Paris, there remain



serious political problems from the perspective of NATO. The reason for this is because the Alliance is currently attempting to expand its own activities to include possibly supporting operations sponsored by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.<sup>66</sup>

In regard to operational control difficulties, the designation of European forces as having dual-roles is not necessarily a fundamental weakness from the perspective of NATO; after all, U.S. forces in Europe long have had multiple roles. While dual-hatting will undoubtedly occur, whenever one unit is tasked to more than one international security organization, planning will be considerably complicated for all involved. This is to say, which headquarters will engage in long-range planning and which organization adapts to the other's operational planning?<sup>67</sup> Difficulties can also be foreseen concerning the European/WEU Corps' challenge to NATO in a political sense. Moreover, one could also envisage a short-warning conflict where operational control arrangements within NATO and the WEU could be confused as political leaders in Europe attempt to decide which organization should lead a Western Alliance military response. Ideally, a clear designation of roles and missions between NATO and the WEU would greatly simplify planning for operational control arrangements for the Western Alliance's Rapid Reaction Formations.

Therefore, in addition to the widely-acknowledged combat support and combat service support problems which have been associated with the Rapid Reaction Forces, the issue of command and operational control have yet to be worked. This apparently holds to be true concerning command issues within this formation, as well as how the proposed WEU/European Corps will ultimately affect its peacetime planning and wartime operation control. As the most important military formation in the Alliance, the prognosis of the Rapid Reaction Force is problematic.

#### **Conclusion.**

That NATO's integrated military command structures are changing substantially is without question. As European security conditions continue their rapid transformation toward an uncertain future, it is only logical that these structures should be altered accordingly. The difficult challenge to NATO military planners is that the future force structure and strategy of the Alliance has been announced and they must make command and operational control arrangements fit together, but within the confines of internal Alliance political realities. And, as described and analyzed above, despite some notable successes, major challenges remain.

Regarding AFNORTH, there are strong indications that a number of countries will be dissatisfied with *whatever* arrangement is finally made. Norway in particular has the

strongest argument apropos its perceived isolation from the Central Region caused by the transfer of BALTAP to AFCENT. But this is a political problem which has only been exacerbated by the exigencies of wartime operational control reform. From a security perspective, given the low threat level in the AFNORTH region, reorganizing this command should not present a major problem. Adequate provisions for inter-regional reinforcement, particularly from the Central Region are imperative in whatever arrangements are eventually made. While acknowledging that Norway can do much on its own to militate against isolation from the Central Region (by joining the EC and/or WEU), a wartime operational control structure that can demonstrably employ allied reinforcements in time of crisis would also be reassuring. In the final analysis, Oslo's enduring problem is the need for allied forces to reinforce its far north, which in reality has little to do with maintaining an obsolete wartime operational control arrangement.

The region that is confronted with the least serious challenge to wartime operational control reform is AFCENT. The demise of the Warsaw Pact and the creation of a belt of states to the east which evince strong amity toward NATO have combined to diminish greatly threats to that region. To be sure, numerous delicate inter-Alliance political problems remain to be resolved. However, it is unlikely that any are contentious enough to derail efforts to reorganize and rationalize the

Alliance's integrated military command in that region.

Notwithstanding the fact that Germany has unified and Bonn is moving toward "normalizing" aspects of its defense structure, the ruling coalition and opposition parties are in agreement that continued participation in NATO will be a *sine qua non* to that country's national security.

It is in AFSOUTH where the Alliance will face its most serious challenges to reform wartime operational control arrangements. Existing arrangements are incapable of allowing the Alliance to deal with the rising number of risks in the region. More functional arrangements may help alleviate previous difficulties by avoiding conflicting claims between allies. However, this in itself is not the answer to all of the region's difficulties. Headquarters with geographic responsibility will still be needed. Indeed, probably the most difficult problem facing the Alliance will be to create headquarters throughout the region with sufficient authority to coordinate allied defenses, as well as to exercise effective command and operational control over reinforcing units from North America and Northern and Central Europe. If there is insufficient political will in the Alliance to effect this ambitious goal, then the ability of NATO to respond militarily to crises in the AFSOUTH region must be judged as suspect.

Finally, creating an effective and flexible peacetime command and wartime operational control structure for the Rapid

Reaction Forces will be absolutely essential if the Alliance has any aspiration to succeed in implementing its new strategy of crisis management. It is clear from the amount of effort that has gone into creating these new formations and the wide interest that Alliance nations have shown in participating in the Rapid Reaction Force that NATO has taken the challenge of creating this capability very seriously indeed.

Notwithstanding the numerous recognized difficulties that will face any commander of the ARRC (e.g., logistic support, transportation to name just two "show stoppers"), a command and operational control structure that is regularly exercised and validated is essential. While this issue might seem self-evident, the widely recognized principle of war, "unity of command," particularly in its joint aspects, has yet to be evinced.

Hence, the end of the cold war and the diminution in identifiable military threats (as opposed to risks) to NATO have not depreciated in any way the continued importance of creating and then maintaining an effective integrated military command structure. NATO military planners will definitely be faced with fewer resources in the coming years to organize and then validate through command post and field exercises the effectiveness of these new arrangements. One can only hope that the uncertain direction of European security will provide

the political and military leadership of NATO with the necessary mandate to achieve this ambitious objective.

## ENDNOTES

1. "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept," Press Communique S-1(91)85, Brussels, NATO Press Service, November 7, 1991.
2. See, *The Washington Post*, December 12, 1991.
3. For background on this process of review see, Michel Fortmann, "NATO Defense Planning in a Post-CFE Environment: Assessing the Alliance Strategy Review (1990-1991)," in *Homeward Bound: Allied Forces in the New Germany*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992, pp. 41-63.
4. There is considerable confusion over the difference between "national command" and "operational control." In essence, national command concerns the internal administration, unit training, logistic support, management, and discipline of armed forces by national authorities. Operational control, on the other hand, relates solely to the actual employment of armed forces for designated objectives, and this can be exercised either by national or allied commanders.
5. This was initiated at the May 1991 Defense Planning Committee and Nuclear Planning Group meeting. "...we have agreed that a study of NATO's command structure should be pursued as a matter of urgency with the aim of streamlining and adapting it to the new situation." See, "Final Communique," Press Communique M-DPC/NPG-1(91)38, Brussels, NATO Press Service, May 29, 1991.
6. See, *Die Welt* (Hamburg), May 27, 1991; and, "Britische Dominanz bei NATO-Eingreiftruppe: NATO-Streitkraeftestruktur mit Fragezeichen," *IAP-Dienst* (11), June 6, 1991, pp. 4-6.
7. "Final Communique of the Defense Planning Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," Press Communique M-DPC-2(91)104, Brussels, NATO Press Service, December 13, 1991.
8. *Ibid.*
9. A recent example of this is found in the lead editorial in *Defense News* (Washington, DC), January 20, 1992.
10. For an in depth assessment of NATO command and control structures see, Paul B. Stares, *Command Performance: The Neglected Dimension of European Security*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1991.

11. See, Helge Hansen, "Impact of a New NATO Strategy Upon Command Structures and Armed Forces," *Wehrtechnik* (2), February 1992, pp. 7-9 in, *For n Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)-WEU-92-060*, March 27, 1992, p. 9.
12. For details on the NATO command structure see, Bruce George, editor, *Jane's NATO Handbook, 1989-1990*, Coulsdon, Surrey: Jane's Defence Data, 1989, pp. 115-154.
13. For provisional numbers on these reductions see, William T. Johnsen and Thomas-Durell Young, *Planning Considerations for a Future Operational Campaign in NATO's Central Region*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992, pp. 6-7.
14. German Federal Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg has already announced severe restrictions in the ability of the *Bundeswehr* to exercise in Germany. See, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich), December 7, 1991. There apparently are difficulties surrounding the negotiation by the Federal Republic of supplemental agreements with some allied countries' Status of Forces agreements. See, *Bild am Sonntag* (Hamburg), December 2, 1991 in, *FBIS-WEU-91-232*, December 3, 1991, p. 17.
15. See, "Final Communique," December 13, 1991.
16. See, Hansen, p. 9.
17. For background on the difficulty of creating command operational control structures for multinational formations see, Roy Wilde, "Multinational Forces: Integration for National Security," *NATO's 16 Nations*, December 1991, pp. 25-27.
18. See, Frederick M. Franks and Alan T. Carver, "Building a NATO Corps," *Military Review*, Volume 71 (7), July 1991, pp. 30-32.
19. This point was argued earlier in Karl Lowe and Thomas-Durell Young, "Multinational Corps in NATO," *Survival*, Volume 33, No. 1, January-February 1991, pp. 66-77.
20. See, Geoffrey Van Orden, "The *Bundeswehr* in Transition," *Survival*, Volume 33 (4), July-August 1991, p. 368.
21. See "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany," Moscow, September 12, 1991, Article 5 (1).
22. "The *Bundeswehr* has been conceived as an army in the Alliance and not as an instrument for independent military power projection on the part of the Federal Republic of Germany.... Therefore, the fighting units of the *Bundeswehr*, with the



exception of some units of the Territorial Army, are intended to be placed under the operational control of NATO." *White Paper 1985: The Situation and Development of the Federal Armed Forces*, Bonn: The Federal Minister of Defence, 1985, p. 72.

23. See, *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), March 1, 1991.

24. For background on this issue see, Thomas-Durell Young, *Bundeswehr Plans for a National Command and Control Structure*, SSI Special Report, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 24, 1992.

25. See, Erhard Drews, et al., "Das neue deutsche Heer: Zielsetzung, Konzeption und Elemente der Heerestruktur 5," *Truppenpraxis* No. 4, 1991, pp. 362-365.

26. Note that the Chief of Staff of the *Luftwaffe*, Lieutenant-General Joerg Kuebart, has gone on record supporting a U.S. commander for AIRCENT. See, "JDW Interview," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, February 29, 1992, p. 368.

27. See, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, October 18, 1991.

28. See, *Aftenposten* (Oslo), September 3, 1991 in, FBIS-WEU-91-174, September 9, 1991, pp. 28-29.

29. See, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow), May 29, 1991 in, FBIS-SOV-91-105, May 31, 1991, p. 2.

30. See, *Aftenposten* (Oslo), October 16, 1991, in FBIS-WEU-91-202, October 18, 1991, p. 32.

31. See, *Aftenposten* (Oslo), December 10, 1991 in, FBIS-WEU-92-011, January 16, 1992, p. 33.

32. See, *Aftenposten* (Oslo), November 29, 1991 in, FBIS-WEU-91-242, December 17, 1991, pp. 40-41.

33. *Ibid.*

34. See, *Defense News* (Washington, DC), December 9, 1991.

35. *Ibid.*

36. See, *Aftenposten* (Oslo), October 26, 1991 in, FBIS-WEU-90-221, November 15, 1991, p. 36.

37. For an assessment on the enlargement issue see, Nicole Gnesotto, "European Defence: Why not the Twelve?," *Chaillot Papers* No. 1, Paris: Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, March 1991.
38. See, *The Guardian* (London), November 4, 1991.
39. For an excellent assessment of contemporary security challenges facing Alliance members in AFSOUTH see, Roberto Aliboni, "European Security Across the Mediterranean," *Chaillot Papers* No. 2, Paris: Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, March 1991.
40. To understand the problems associated with Turkish relations with Syria and Iraq, a review of the history of irredentism in the region is imperative. See, Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979, pp. 187-197.
41. It has been reported that Libya has recently obtained missiles which are capable of striking Italy. See, *The Daily Telegraph* (London), January 11, 1992.
42. For Spanish perceptions of recent developments in Algeria see, ABC (Madrid), January 29, 1992 in, FBIS-WEU-92-023, February 4, 1992, p. 41.
43. See, John Newhouse, "The Diplomatic Round: A Collective Nervous Breakdown," *New Yorker*, September 2, 1991, pp. 88-89.
44. *Defense News* (Washington, DC), April 29, 1991.
45. See, Draft Interim Report by the Subcommittee on the Southern Region, Political Committee, North Atlantic Assembly, PC/SR (91) 5, Brussels, International Secretariat, October 1991.
46. See, Mark Stenhouse and Bruce George, "NATO's Southern Region," *Jane's NATO Handbook*, pp. 133-134.
47. This argument is made by the current commander of Allied Naval Forces Baltic Approaches, VADM Klaus Rehder, in, *Wehrtechnik*, No. 11, November 1991, p. 32.
48. For background on the current French defense debate regarding Alliance policy see, David S. Yost, "Mitterrand and Defense and Security Policy," *French Politics and Society*, Volume 9, Nos. 3-4, Summer-Fall 1991, pp. 141-158.
49. See, *Defense News* (Washington, DC), March 2, 1992.

50. "London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance," July 5-6, 1990, Brussels, NATO Information Service, point 14.
51. "Final Communique," May 29, 1991.
52. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, November 30, 1991, p. 1031. For background on naval forces and multinationality see, Strategy and Campaign Department, *Options for NATO Multinational Maritime Forces (NMMRFS)*, Report 5-91, Newport, RI: Naval War College, May 31, 1991.
53. *Ibid.*
54. See *Die Welt* (Hamburg), May 27, 1991; and, "Britische Dominanz bei NATO-Eingreiftruppe," *IAP-Dienst*, No. 11, June 14, 1991, pp. 4-6.
55. See, *The Independent* (London), May 15, 1991.
56. See, "Final Communique," May 29, 1991.
57. *Ibid.*
58. See, Press Association (London), February 14, 1992 in, FBIS-WEU-92-032, February 18, 1992.
59. See, *Die Welt* (Hamburg), October 29, 1991.
60. See, Larry Grossman, "NATO's New Strategy," *Air Force Magazine*, Volume 75, No. 3, March 1992, pp. 29-30.
61. See, *Financial Times* (London), October 16, 1991. A text of the security initiatives is found in *Le Monde* (Paris), October 17, 1991.
62. See, *The Washington Post*, December 12, 1991.
63. One German journalist reports that the European Corps has come under criticism in German due to its lack of "reality." See Michael Inacker's excellent piece in *Rheinischer Merkur: Christ und Welt* (Bonn), October 25, 1991.
64. See, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, November 7, 1991.
65. See Jim Hoagland's essay on this subject in, *The Washington Post*, March 19, 1992.
66. See, *Defense News* (Washington, DC), March 2, 1992.

67. NATO is apparently attempting to preempt the WEU and CSCE from obtaining military roles that could it could assume. Secretary General Manfred Woerner has gone on record stating future crises could be managed by these organizations collectively. While this is indeed the case, from the perspective of planning, clear delineation of military roles and responsibilities would mitigate against confusion during a crisis. See, *Handelsblatt* (Hamburg), March 25, 1992 in, *FBIS-WEU-92-059*, March 26, 1992, pp. 6-8.